Chapter 6

Activity patterns: Sivepe

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Introduction

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The Sivepe survey involved 35 adults (17 men and 18 women). Of these, 23 were resident in the village throughout, the remainder either commencing or terminating their residence during the survey period. In all, a total of 5,310 man-days was covered although, on account of temporary absences and sickness, detailed records were only kept for a shorter period. Of the total available labour time 6 per cent (320 man-days) was lost through absences longer than 24 hours and a further 4 per cent (212.4 man-days) through sickness within the village. However, during a single week in period I, at the height of an influenza epidemic, 29.6 per cent of potential labour time was unavailable (see Fig.6:1).

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(a) Temporary absences

A total of 453 man-nights was spent away from the village, or 8.5 per cent of all covered by the survey.[1] An analysis of reasons for absence is presented in Table 6:1. The major single cause, 36 per cent of the total, is visits to ex-servicemen settlers at Sangara, mostly by kinsmen[2] to assist in establishing the block. A further 26 per cent of absences involved garden work, either protecting the gardens from incursions by pigs, or facilitating intensive clearing programmes.

While the fulfilling of social obligations accounts for only 16 per cent of all absences, it involves the largest number of people (24 of a possible 35, compared with 13 for garden work and 5 at Sangara) and is characteristically of short duration, seldom more than one or two nights away from the village. By contrast, the

[1] The difference between this and the figure of 6 per cent for man-days quoted above being that some of the nights involved absences of less than 24 hours duration.

[2] A daughter of one of the sample is married to a settler while a Jegase man from a neighbouring village also has a block at Sangara.

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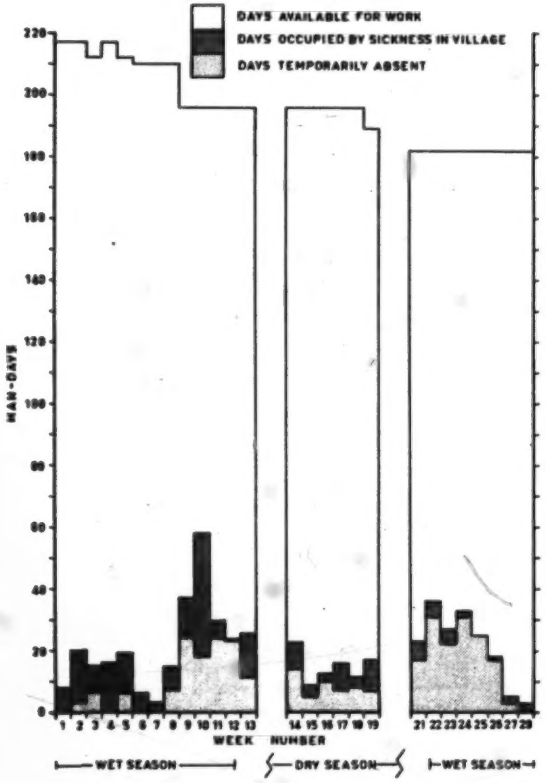
SIVEPE FIGURE 6:1

POTENTIAL WORKING DAYS AND DAYS OCCUPIED BY ABSENCE AND SICKNESS



mean duration of absences at Sangara is 26.7 nights. In the case of such long absences only one member of the household is normally involved so that the routine of gardening activities is not greatly disrupted. 166

As Fig.6.1 demonstrates, some periodic variation is discernible in the pattern of absences. During the first seven weeks of period I absences occurred on only 1.7 per cent of survey nights, but for the rest of the survey a substantially higher percentage was maintained. These first weeks largely coincided with an (abortive) attempt to establish a communal cash crop garden in the village.[1]

The proportion of absences rose to 10.1 per cent during the last six weeks of period I, falling slightly to 7.4 per cent during period II, the main cash cropping season, and rising to a peak of 15 per cent in period III. During this last period over half (59 per cent) involved visits to Sangara.

In analysing absences according to sex, age and cash cropping status some meaningful patterns emerge (see Table 6:2). Men tend to absent themselves more than women, largely on account of their greater dealings with the external agencies (17 per cent of all their absences). [562]

The 25-34 years old age group is distinguished by its very low incidence of absences - less than 2 per cent of survey nights compared with over 10 per cent for all other age groups. Virtually all absences in this age group were connected with social obligations or garden work; no visits were made to Sangara. The mobility of this age group may be influenced by the fact that it comprises young married people with families.

Cash croppers absent themselves less than non-cash croppers, while almost 42 per cent of the former's absences is connected with subsistence garden work and only 6 per cent involved visits to Sangara. By contrast non-cash croppers are not only absent more frequently but spent 55 per cent of all nights absent at Sangara. Since assistance to settlers is normally reciprocated with cash payments or trade store goods (usually food), evidently those with no reliable avenue for acquiring cash within the village context perceive assisting kinsmen on the land settlement scheme as an important alternative source. [434]

(b) Sickness

While sickness and the care of sick people account for a minority of absences from the village, they did result in 212.4 man-days being spent totally inactive within the village and a further 615 464 734 164

[1] See pp.44-5. 1

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A,[See Category 245, pp. 44-45--Analysis]

8: Waddell & Krinks E-4,5 (1964-1965) 1968 QJ23 Orokaiva QJ23

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Table 6:2

Sivepe: nights absent from the village by cause and according to sex, age and cash cropping status

	Sex		Age				Cash cropping status	
	M	F	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+	Yes	No
Total nights present	2,629	2,681	826	1,334	882	2,268	3,157	2,153
Nights absent (per cent)	10.3	6.8	11.5	1.8	10.4	10.6	5.7	12.6
Absences - by cause (as a percentage of total absences)								
Garden work	28.0	23.8	2.2	33.3	13.0	40.2	41.7	16.2
Social obligations	15.9	17.1	27.4	45.8	22.8	6.6	21.7	12.9
Sickness	5.5	11.0	-	4.2	-	14.1	1.1	12.1
At Sangara	31.7	41.4	69.5	-	12.0	34.9	6.1	55.1
External agencies	16.6	6.6	-	-	46.8	4.1	27.2	2.9
Other	2.2	-	1.0	16.7	5.4	-	2.2	0.7
Total	99.9	99.9	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9

man-hours were absorbed by clinic visits and related public health activities. So, grouping all three categories together, sickness accounts for almost 7 per cent of potential activity time.

In analysing the 212.4 man-days spent inactive, Fig.6:1 indicates that 26 per cent fell during two weeks in period I when an influenza epidemic swept the area. It is during the latter part of the wet season that sickness reaches its most serious proportions, accounting for 7 per cent of potential activity time. Malaria, being endemic, is the most common cause along with other parasitic diseases of a debilitating nature; hence the seasonal pattern.

Table 6:3

Sivepe: incidence of sickness according to sex, age and cash cropping status

	Sex		Age				Cash cropping status	
	M	F	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+	Yes	No
Percentage of days sick to total survey days	5.1	4.2	2.3	2.0	1.5	8.3	1.8	8.8

Table 6:3 shows that the older people suffer most and also that non-cash croppers spend a significantly higher proportion of their time sick than cash croppers. While this is largely because the heads of non-cash cropping households are, on average, older than the others[1] it may well be that the non-cash croppers, lacking the initiative of the others, more readily assume the sick role.

Temporary absences apart, 4,990 man-days were spent in Sivepe, and during this time the villagers' activities occupied 28,975 hours, or 5.8 hours per man-day. Furthermore, virtually all these activities, except hunting, certain social activities and, occasionally, house construction, were confined to the daylight hours.

Patterns of activity and seasonal influences

The adult residents of Sivepe are active, on average, 40.6 hours per man-week, although, as Fig.6:2 demonstrates, there is a substantial variation from week to week. The actual range during the observed period was 34.4 to 51.3 man-hours.

[1] Of the 11 households resident throughout the survey the heads of the non-cash cropping ones are all in the 45+ age bracket while only 2 of the 7 cash cropping ones are.